



Office of the State Fire Marshal

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THE OFFICE OF STATE FIRE MARSHAL JOHN C. DEAN, STATE FIRE MARSHAL

The primary function of the State Fire Marshal is to protect lives and property from fire. It is the duty of the State Fire Marshal to enforce all laws, ordinances and rules directed toward and concerned with the prevention and containment of fire and the protection of life and property. The State Fire Marshal is responsible for the suppression of arson and the investigation of cause, origin and the circumstances of fires. In addition, the Fire Marshal has under his domain, the storage, sale and use of combustibles, flammables and explosives. Building safety and fire prevention efforts responsibilities include such focus areas as the installation, maintenance or sale of automatic and other fire alarm systems and fire extinguishing systems; the construction, maintenance and regulation of fire escapes; as well as the adequacy of means of egress in case of fire from buildings.

The Division of State Fire Prevention was created in 1937 to combat an increasing number of fraudulent insurance claims resulting from set fires. Since then there has been a substantial growth in the areas of responsibility of the State Fire Marshal's Office, which replaced the Division of State Fire Prevention in 1972. The scope of statutory authority has broadened to include a number of activities related to life safety as well as fire prevention.

The programs of the State Fire Marshal have primary goals of:

1. Investigation of the cause and origin of fires and explosions;
2. Arson investigation, evidence gathering and case preparation for possible prosecution;
3. Regulate, permit and inspect for the use of explosives, fireworks and certain flammable liquids;
4. Inspect approximately 25 different types of buildings and facilities with the primary focus to enforce life safety codes and standards;

5. Review plans to issue permits for construction and alteration of public buildings, handicap accessibility, installation of fire alarm and fire sprinkler systems; installation of above ground fuel storage tanks, amusement rides, and self-service gas stations;
6. Conduct and offer specialized training for trade professionals, care givers, code enforcement officials, and fire and law enforcement professionals; and
7. Coordinate efforts of specialty subject areas such as the Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Task Force.



Investigation Division

The Investigation Division consists of two sergeants; eleven fire investigators and two accelerant detection dogs.

During 2003, the bureau responded to 403 fires, 35 fireworks incidents, 44 explosives incidents, and 149 other investigations. Investigators inspected 366 fireworks display sites.

The investigations by county were:

Androscoggin 54	Aroostook 32
Cumberland 49	Franklin 20
Hancock 29	Kennebec 56
Knox 35	Lincoln 14
Oxford 26	Penobscot 56
Piscataquis 16	Sagadahoc 26
Somerset 24	Waldo 12
Washington 17	York 86

Fires by classification:

- Accidental – 39%
- Intentional – 32%
- Undetermined – 29%

Investigations in 2003 resulted in 56 arrests/convictions; 35 summons issued; and 19 Cases Pending in DA/AG's Offices with post conviction reviews with conviction upheld two times. In recent years, the growing complexity of methods used in investigations has required additional training for investigators who, in turn, train first responders from local EMS, Fire and Police units. In 2003 FMO Investigators provided arson awareness and detection, forensics in arson, post blast, Incident Response to Terrorist Bombing, and fire investigation techniques training to nearly 500 first responders.

Senior Investigators also provide instruction at the Maine Criminal Justice Academy, the University of Maine's Criminal Justice program and the National Fire Academy.

Most of the Investigators are now *Certified Instructors* for the *Maine Criminal Justice Academy* and are actively involved in teaching courses affiliated with the Academy. This offers the FMO an opportunity for valuable exposure within the law enforcement community. The Investigators have taught several classes on *The Incident Response to Terrorist Bombings - Awareness Level* program which focuses on incendiary devices and improvised explosive devices. This program has been accepted by the Academy for in-service training credit for law enforcement officers. This program has been well received. The office has seen an increased use of improvised explosive devices.

While the Investigation Division focuses heavily on origin and cause responses to fires and explosions, this Division is also involved in pro-active activities such as undercover illegal fireworks details and mass gathering events such as the Phish Concert.

In 2003, the Office of State Fire Marshal signed an MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) with the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives that established the Maine Fire and Explosives Task Force. The office was the first state agency in the country to use the new ATF Bomb Arson Tracking System (BATS). The new system will facilitate the sharing of information about bomb, arson and related cases between local, state, and other federal agencies.

Prevention Division

The Prevention Division is lead by a Supervisor and is staffed by ten Inspectors covering the entire state with five plans reviewers and three clerical personnel. In 2003 the prevention unit acted 6,108 times. These actions included inspections, permitting and licensing, and plans review. The Fire Marshal's Office staff of inspectors, well versed in the National Fire Protection Association standards, conducted approximately 4800 inspections during 2003.

Maine's Department of Human Services requested 3,878 inspections of its licensed facilities in 2003. Of these, 82.4% were for facilities that house children on a daily basis anywhere between three to ten hours each day or more. In this way the Fire Marshal's staff play a critical role in insuring the safety and wellbeing of approximately 10,000 Maine children each day. Children, below the age of four and adults sixty-five and older, make up over 50% of fire fatalities nationally. The 17.4% of remaining facilities include residential care facilities for the elderly individuals; traditional nursing homes, assisted living programs and facilities aimed at assisting individuals with mental health problems.

The Prevention Division also permits for construction, fireworks operation, sprinkler systems, and amusement rides. The bulk of the permits, 779 in total, are the result of construction plans being reviewed for compliance with NFPA codes.

In 2003 the Plan Review Section issued:

779 Construction permits

578 Barrier free permits

483 Sprinkler permits

226 Sprinkler licenses were issued including:

72 Contractor licenses

102 Inspector licenses

52 Responsible Managing Supervisor license

13 Self-service gas station permits

59 Aboveground flammable liquid storage tank permits

Another important activity of the Prevention Division is the inspection and permitting of amusement park rides. Each year thousands of Maine citizens and visitors alike attend fairs or go to an amusement park. In 2003 approximately 444 rides were inspected at fixed park and fair locations. When necessary, rides have been shut down until repairs are made. This effort requires both inspectors and investigators due to the size of the state and number of fairs. Additionally, permits were also issued, following an inspection for:

366 Fireworks Operations

119 Explosives Storage and Transport Facilities

399 Dance Halls

In addition to on-site inspections, construction plans for new buildings are reviewed for compliance with fire and life safety standards as well as the Americans with Disabilities Act and Maine Human Rights Commission rules and regulations regarding accessibility. The Division also reviews fire sprinkler plans, mechanical rides, above ground storage of flammable liquids and administers the Aboveground Storage Tank Insurance Fund.

Like their counterparts in investigations, inspectors also provide training and guidance to those operating facilities that must comply with fire safety regulations. Inspectors provided workshops to DHS personnel and staff from other state and local agencies that work in licensing and operation of day care, foster care and adult care facilities. Upon invitation from local planning boards, county chiefs associations, mutual aid and trade associations, inspectors have addressed fire and safety issues associated with bulk storage facilities, marina fuel systems, and mechanical ride accident reporting.

One of the most significant achievements in the Prevention Division has been the reduction in time between the request for an inspection and the inspection from 165 days to 33 days. The addition of three inspectors as well as improved communication technology and professional work ethics on the part of the Inspectors and staff have all contributed to this accomplishment.

Fire Marshal History

The history of the State Fire Marshal's Office has evolved from the creation in 1937 as the Division of State Fire Prevention, to combat fraudulent insurance claims. On July 1, 1972, the division was transferred to the newly created Department of Public Safety. The following year the bureau's name was changed to the Office of State Fire Marshal. The following have served in the role of State Fire Marshal:

Director Joseph A.P. Flynn 1939 to 1965
Director and Fire Marshal Charles F. Rogan 1965 to 1975
Fire Marshal Don Bissett 1977 to 1991
Fire Marshal Dennis Lundstedt 1992 to 1995
Fire Marshal Ladd Alcott 1995 to 1998
Fire Marshal John C. Dean 1998 to present

Maine Fire Deaths

Since 1950, the Office of State Fire Marshal has kept detailed records of fire deaths in the state. The 1990s was the safest decade, thanks to the prominent use of smoke detectors, improved building codes and increased fire prevention programs by local fire departments.

1950 to 1959 – 484 deaths
1960 to 1969 – 493 deaths
1970 to 1979 – 498 deaths
1980 to 1989 – 324 deaths
1990 to 1999 – 200 deaths

2000 – 17 deaths
2001 – 18 deaths
2002 – 16 deaths
2003 – 20 deaths

Maine's Deadliest Fires Since 1945:

1/31/45	Auburn, 17 killed, one nurse and 16 infants at Le Coste Baby Home
1947	Forest fires, 15 killed and over 200,000 acres burned. Damage over \$30 million dollars
3/2/50	Monson, eight killed, 2 adults and 6 children
3/27/60	Winthrop, six killed, a mother and 5 children
12/15/63	Portland, six killed, 6 children
7/4/67	Oxford, eight killed, 3 adults and 5 children
9/20/84	Hartland, five killed, 1 adult and 4 children

Fires Since 1990 With Three or More Deaths

10/26/90	Corinna, four dead, 1 adult and 3 children
6/7/90	Milo, three dead
2/18/91	Topsham, three dead, 3 adults
12/3/92	Portland, four dead, 3 adults and 1 child
1/23/92	Kittery, three dead, 3 adults
2/3/93	Augusta, three dead, 1 adult and 2 children
6/19/93	New Sweden, three dead, 1 adult and 2 children
9/5/94	Kittery, three dead, 1 adult and 2 children
4/23/97	Lewiston, three dead, 1 adult and 2 children
5/31/98	Madison, three dead, 1 adult and 2 children
1/11/99	Surry, three dead, 3 adults
1/13/00	Unity, four dead, 3 children and Unity Fire Chief collapses and dies at fire scene

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2003 Fire Deaths (FMO Investigations)

Location	Date	Time	Sex	Age	Occupancy	Smoke Detector	Cause
Waterville	1/3/03	0804	F	77	Single Family	Unknown	Accidental-operating space heater too close to ordinary combustibles
Belfast	1/5/03	2241	M F	55 86	Single Family	Yes	Accidental-careless disposal of smoking materials
Bethel	1/6/03	2019	F	42	Vehicle		Accidental-unknown exact source of heat of ignition
South Portland	1/16/03	Unknown	M M	? ?	Wooded area campsite (homemade)		Undetermined-exact ignition source could not be determined due to extent of damage
Oakfield	2/1/03	0712	F	77	Mobile Home	None	Undetermined-exact ignition source could not be determined due to extent of damage
Kittery	2/25/03	2003	M	54	Duplex Dwelling	Unknown	Accidental-cannot eliminate food being left on stove

Bangor	3/5/03	1635	M	55	Apartment	Yes	Accidental-careless use of smoking materials
Windham	4/5/03	2323	M	80	Single Family	Yes	Accidental-careless use of smoking materials
Thomaston	4/29/03	2346	M	91	Single Family	Unknown	Accidental-careless use of smoking materials
Winterport	5/5/03	1317	F	60	Outside Fire		Un-permitted burn
Bangor	6/29/03	2055	F M	42 48	Apartment	Yes	Accidental-resistance heating
Topsham	7/2/03	0634	M	16	Repair Garage		Accidental-ignition of flammable liquid
Glenburn	7/7/03	0352	M	40	Mobile Home	No	Undetermined-exact ignition source could not be determined due to extent of damage
Pownal	7/7/03	1417	M	59	Outside		Accidental-cutting gasoline tank, torch ignited
Lewiston	9/13/03	1205	M	?	Vehicle		Undetermined-unable to determine due to extent of damage
Monroe	9/19/03	0913	M	72	Log Cabin	No	Undetermined-exact ignition source could not be determined due to extent of damage
Bangor	11/6/03	0437	M	30	Apartment	Unknown	Accidental
Hartland	11/15/03	2049	M	25	Mobile Home	Unknown	Undetermined-exact ignition source could not be determined due to extent of damage
Winter Harbor	12/27/03	0400	M	21	Vehicle		Undetermined-exact ignition source could not be determined due to extent of damage
Waterville	12/31/03	1326	F	75	Apartment	Yes	Accidental-careless use of smoking materials

Data Sources and Analysis

The data used for this report was received from fire departments throughout the State of Maine. The data was imported into the MEFIRS database. Imported fire department data is validated for NFIRS compliance and provided quality assurance assessment by the Office of State Fire Marshal. Upon complete validation, data is then exported to the United States Fire Administration. As data analysis by the Office of State Fire Marshal provides quality assurance of known statewide issues, it is assumed that the integrity of each data element was reviewed at the local level.

During 2003, usable MEFIRS data was received by 114 fire departments. This data provided a total of 51,899 incidents. Of this total, the breakdown of this data consisted of 3,859 fire related incidents, 30,473 EMS incidents, and 17,566 non-Fire & non-EMS incidents. It should be noted that these counts exclude "No Activity" incidents.

The departments reporting in this report experienced the following losses:

Incident Loss

Property Loss = \$7,054,852.00
Contents Loss = 3,721,911.00
\$10,776,763.00

Pre-Incident Value

Property Value = \$109,266,802.00
Contents Value = 22,680,105.00
\$131,946,907.00

The following Fire Departments submitted data to the Maine Fire Incident Reporting System for 2003 that was not in a useable format at the time this report was compiled. Their efforts towards aiding in the completion are appreciated.

Berwick Fire Department
Glenburn Fire Department
Haynesville Fire Department
Winslow Fire Department